

Thomas and Eliphalet Williams House
North side of Rt. 4
Salisbury Heights
Merrimack County
New Hampshire

HABS No. NH-168

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PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
Washington, D. C. 20240

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HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

THOMAS and ELIPHALET WILLIAMS HOUSE

HABS No. NH-168

Location: North side of Rt. 4, Salisbury Heights, Merrimack County, New Hampshire

Present Owner: Ellen O'C. Turner

Present Occupant: Same

Present Use: Private Residence.

Brief Statement of Significance: Originally one of the most elaborate and imposing houses in the village. House demonstrates the early New England practice of incorporating place of business (store) into the dwelling house. During the period when Freemasonry was outlawed secret meetings were held in this house.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION.

A. Physical History:

1. Built soon after 1790 by Thomas and Eliphalet Williams. Until about 1850 the records in the Merrimack County Registry of Deeds are fragmentary. In 1850 house is in possession of Benjamin Pettingill; he wills it to his daughter Lydia Batchelder. In Dec 1851 Asa D. Runals quitclaims house to Harriet A. Batchelder, daughter of said Lydia, (109/29).
 - Dec 1854 Jonathan Tenney to Moses B. Calef (132/372).
 - Feb 1861 Moses B. Calef to Stephen Coombs (161/271).
 - Sep 1865 Stephen Coombs to Samuel A. Minard (179/536).
 - Jul 1868 Samuel A. Minard to Lorinda Rollins (195/31).
 - Feb 1871 Lorinda D. Rollins to Benjamin Scribuer (204/52).
 - Jan 1878 Benjamin Scribuer to Dana & Jennie Mann (242/16).
 - Jun 1917 Jennie Mann to Herbert M. Fears (426/325).
 - Jan 1927 Amos Blandin (Admin of H. M. Fears Estate) to Alpha Terrien (486/588).
 - Jan 1930 Alpha Terrien to Sylvia McLaughlin (507/580).
 - Apr 1930 gap in the records
 - Apr 1930 Fred H. Kearney to Ruben Webber (518/61).
 - Aug 1942 Ruben Webber to Mortgage Security Corporation (594/454).
 - Nov 1943 M.S.C. to Helen Gray Allen (603/307).
 - Apr 1944 Helen Gray Allen to Vera L. Grant
 - Apr 1944 Vera L. Grant to Carl Allen (604/70).
 - Oct 1946 Carl Allen to Leo Bourassa (633/558).
 - Jan 1950 Leo Bourassa to Herbert Thornton Turner (681/27)
- Mrs. Ellen O'C. Turner to present.

2. Date of erection: "soon after 1790" /John J. Dearborn, History of Salisbury, Manchester, New Hampshire, 1890, p. 345/.
3. Architect: Thomas and Eliphalet Williams (brothers), carpenters and builders /Dearborn, p. 342, 345/.
4. Builder, suppliers, etc: Unknown, other than the Williams brothers.
5. Original Plans, Construction, etc: None known.
6. Notes on Alterations and additions: In the late 19th century the house had a one story porch (or "piazza") on the front and east gable end /old photo in possession of Mrs. Ellen Turner/ and a balcony on the second story exterior of the west gable end /interview with the owner and with a Mr. Galumien, a selectman of Salisbury aged about 70/. The balcony was removed by Carl Allen, c. 1944-6. The house in 1886 was said to have more "fine wood work" than any other house in the town /Dearborn, p. 346/. The woodwork is now removed and the present owner does not know its whereabouts. In the late 19th century the barn was attached to the rear of the house /Mrs. Turner's photo/ but has since been made a separate building.
7. Important old views: Two old photos in possession of Mrs. Turner. Neither of exceeding great value.

B. Historical events connected with the structure:

It is stated in the Salisbury town history (Dearborn, p. 342) that the Williamses and other carpenters of Salisbury helped build the old Dartmouth Hall (1786) in Hanover. I can neither prove nor disprove this; Frederick Chase's History of Dartmouth (Cambridge, 1891, Vol I, p. 576) simply states that the project drew a large body of workmen from near and far. The Williamses are not mentioned by name. Eliphalet Williams in 1794 opened a store in the West end of the house (p. 346). The meetings of the Samaritan Lodge of Masons were held secretly in a hall over the old store in the Williams house, /Dearborn, p. 356/.

Prepared by: Charles B. Wood, III
New Hampshire Historical
Society
May 1964

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION.

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural interest and merit: Major points of interest are triglyphed frieze across facade, Venetian window, and elaborate interior stair hall. The incorporation of the store into the house is of interest, especially as it dates from the period of original construction.
2. Condition of Fabric: Very good.

B. Technical Description of Exterior:

1. Overall Dimensions: approximately 45 feet front, 30 feet deep.
2. Foundations: Quarried granite blocks.
3. Wall Construction: Heavy timber frame, vertical studs. Clapboards fastened with wrought nails, lap joints.
4. Porches, etc: One story porch on East side of house; front half is open, rear half is enclosed and is actually an extension of the interior space of the rear part of ground floor. Contains three windows on the East side. Enclosed part of "ell" projects four feet to rear of house. Low pitch shed roof.
5. Chimneys: Two, one at each gable end. West chimney is not in its original location; it has been moved from the center of the west half of the house right up against the west wall; it is now visible directly behind the window in the center of the attic gable. East chimney is set back about five feet from gable wall; this is its original location. Stacks are small; about one foot on a side.
6. Openings:
 - a. Doorways and doors: Main entranceway consists of door, flanking vertical sidelights and frieze and flat cornice. Arrangement of triglyphs in frieze is completely mis-understood. Over the side lights are rudimentary Doric caps, suggesting that there should be pilasters beneath them. The four panel door is probably not original. In the center of the west half of facade is another door which opened into store. Simple surround. Door is of six panels with raised fields flush with the stiles, all original. Also retains original hardware and large wooden box lock (on interior).

- b. Windows and shutters: Venetian Window in facade above front door; segmental part encloses curved tracery. Fenestration of facade is not symmetrical because of the placement of the door into store. All double hung sash, 6/6 on facade. All windows have louvred shutters and shallow planed moulding surrounds. Five windows in west gable end, two with 12/12 sash. Originally all were 12/12. Large modern "picture" window in rear.

7. Roof:

- a. Shape, covering: Simple pitch. Covered with asphalt shingles.
- b. Cornice, Eaves: Cornice has marked horizontal projection. Frieze of Doric triglyphs and blank metopes across the facade. The overhang of the raking cornice over the gable ends is about one foot. The cornice profile does not conform to any academic order; it is a simple ogee molding.
- c. Dormers, cupolas: none.
- d. Framing: inaccessible.

C. Technical Description of Interior:

- 1. Floor Plans: Ground floor. Central hall with stair; parlor to the E (front) and what was originally the store to the W (front). Central hall goes back only to longitudinal axis (center) of house; behind this is modern rearrangement of rooms - kitchen, dining room and "den". Second Floor. Central stair hall, Bedroom to E and W (front) and 3 bedrooms to rear. It is difficult to tell whether or not this is the original room layout; except for modern baths, it probably is.
- 2. Stairways: Very handsome stair in spacious central hall. Ascends in two tiers with a landing 3/4 of the way up. Open string construction, two turned balusters to a tread, scrolled brackets on tread ends. Railing ramped but not eased; turned newel posts with ball shaped "drops" at the landing and second story. Upper stair hall is of interest. First run of stairs ascends to landing two steps below the level of the second floor. From this landing steps on three sides lead to different rooms. Main stair doubles back and leads to upper floor landing.
- 3. Flooring: Wide pine boards, all old and probably original.

4. Wall and Ceiling Finish: All ceilings plaster except for one room which is modern composition board. Walls either unpainted plaster or paper, (modern).
5. Doorways and Doors: All doors six panel, all original, or old.
6. Trim: Heavy chair rail in E parlor. Recessed windows with embrasures and window seats. Original fireplace surround with croisettes and pulvinated frieze, simple cornice. Also old fireplace surround in upstairs E bedroom. All rooms show corner posts.
7. Hardware: Original large wooden boxlock and key on inside of door to store. Long strap iron hinges. HL hinges on all other doors and old latches.
8. Lighting: Electric fixtures.
9. Heating: Oil burner, steam radiators. Fireplaces in E parlor and Bedroom above it.

D. Site:

1. Orientation: Facade of house faces south.
2. Enclosures: None.
3. Outbuildings: Combination woodshed-garage to the rear of main house.
4. Walks, Drives, etc: None
5. Landscaping, simple, not original.

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